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SERMON,

PREACHED

FEBRUARY 25th, 1794,

BEFORE THE

PROVIDENT ASSOCIATION.



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A
SERMON,

PREACHED AT THE
PARISH CHURCH OF TYNEMOUTH,

On Tuesday the 25th of February, 1794,

BEFORE THE
PROVIDENT ASSOCIATION,

By the Rev. W. HASWELL. K

NEWCASTLE:
PRINTED BY M. BROWN,
FOR THE AUTHOR.

17/3/55

SERMON

PREACHED AT THE

PARISH CHURCH OF TYNNMOUTH

ON THE 17th DAY OF MARCH 1855



PROVIDED BY

THE BRITISH MUSEUM

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NEWCASTLE

PRINTED BY M. THOMAS

101 THE ARCADE

TO THE
MEMBERS
OF THE
PROVIDENT ASSOCIATION,
INSTITUTED AT NORTH-SHIELDS,
FOR MUTUAL RELIEF,

THIS DISCOURSE,

(PUBLISHED AT THEIR UNANIMOUS REQUEST)

IS INSCRIBED,

BY THEIR AFFECTIONATE BROTHER

AND SINCERE FRIEND,

THE AUTHOR.

TO THE

MEMBERS

PROTESTANT ASSOCIATION

INSTITUTIONS AND SOCIETIES

FOR THE LATTER

THIS DISCOVERY

CONSIDERED AT THEIR ANNUAL MEETING

AND A RESOLUTION

IN THEIR AFFECTIONATE PROTEST

AND RESOLUTION

THE ASSOCIATION

S E R M O N.

I *TIMOTHY, 5th Chap. 8th Verse.*

BUT IF ANY MAN PROVIDE NOT FOR HIS OWN, AND ESPECIALLY
FOR THOSE OF HIS OWN HOUSE, HE HATH DENIED THE FAITH,
AND IS WORSE THAN AN INFIDEL.

MANKIND, even in their depraved and most *uncivilized* condition, are no where entirely destitute of natural affection. Led by this sweet impulse of the Divinity, the most savage people upon earth endeavour to supply the wants of their offspring by all the means which their situation affords. The toil of the chase is undertaken with pleasure,—the difficulties of traffic are overcome by perseverance, ---and even the dangers and calamities of war itself are steadily encountered, to secure the necessities of life, and rejoice the hearts of their children and domestics.

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We

We find this to be the case even in those distant climes where the light of Christianity never shone,—where the sound of the gospel never was heard,—and where, perhaps, no regular system of polity as yet exists. May we not then reasonably expect in a *civilized* state, where extensive commerce has polished the manners of its inhabitants,—where knowledge of the liberal arts gently unfolds the latent powers of the mind,—and religion superadds her powerful motives ;—(with such advantages, I say, might we not expect) that natural affection would proportionably actuate the human mind?—Alas ! experience teaches, that improvement in virtue does not always keep pace with the means and opportunities of melioration.—It is a sad proof of our fallen state, that in our progress towards perfection in virtuous attainments, the advances that we make are reluctant and slow ;—but on the contrary, 'tis not unusual to see the *man of learning* fall, by a retrograde motion, from the acquirements he had obtained, into his original state of degeneracy and corruption.

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In order to correct these frailties of our nature, these abuses of our duty, I shall endeavour to shew the obligations by which mankind are bound to provide for their respective families, which are threefold,---natural,---political,---and religious.

First of all—Nature prefers her *indisputable* claims. “Can a mother forget her sucking child?”—Can a father forget his beloved offspring, that he should not have so much compassionate affection for them as to provide for their necessities?—Where is the parent that could see, with an unrelenting heart, the son of his bosom exposed to want and misery?—That could, unconcerned, behold him begging bitter bread?—perhaps under the aggravated distresses of sickness and disease! Callous must be his heart,—devoid of all those finer feelings of the soul,—and an utter stranger to those tender emotions of parental love which ennoble human nature! It is wonderful indeed, that any son of Adam, that any Christian at least, can be so far lost to duty and affection, as not

to summon up all the powers of the parent, to avert those clouds of calamity which hover about his offspring.

But we are not only excited by the ties of Nature to the discharge of this duty ;—but in a political capacity, as members of society also, it is expected from us.

The primary concern of every well-regulated Government is the happiness of the subject. Each man is restrained from invading another's rights by salutary laws,—and encouraged by adequate motives to perform well his part on the theatre of life. Those who are possessed of property claim the assistance of those who want it,—and the latter in return are justly entitled to a reward for their service. Hence arise mutual obligation and reciprocal dependence :—as in the body natural, where the members (though not all ordained to the same office, yet) are all essentially necessary—“ and as the head “ cannot say to the feet, I have no need of you, “ neither

“ neither can the feet reply to the head, we
 “ have no need of thee.”

Man, as a social creature, not only delights to converse with the world in general, but also feels an inclination to form a particular connexion with some individual. Imperfect is his enjoyment—incomplete his happiness without such an union. He wants an help-meet for the many vicissitudes to which he is exposed. If prosperous,—one who may rejoice with him, and add a relish to his enjoyments by a participation of his bliss :—If the contrary, a friend who may share his misfortunes, and by dividing, alleviate his calamity.—For such an invaluable Associate, man shrinks not at labour,—but “ rises early and late takes rest, and “ eats the bread of carefulness.”

But as in every community there are diversities of tempers and dispositions, some alas ! are to be found so abandoned, as even to forget every relative duty, as well as that which is due
 to

to their Creator. For such miscreants, laws are enacted that oblige them to maintain their children so long as they are able, how unwilling or negligent soever:—nor are they exonerated from this charge, until they are so far reduced as to want assistance and relief themselves.

The precepts of our religion also inculcate this important, indispensable duty. The belief of a Supreme Being, who presides over the affairs of the universe, is the foundation of all religion;—“and that there *is* a God, all Nature cries aloud through all her works.”

Various were the false religions which obtained in different parts of the world before the gospel dispensation. Many of them were even derogatory of that honour and reverence which their professors pretended to ascribe unto their deities. But, whilst “darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the hearts of the people,”—no wonder if their ideas of a Divine Nature, and of the worship which was due to him, were replete with absurdities and mistakes.

But in these latter days, “when God hath
 “spoken unto us by his Son,”—when he hath
 revealed his will to highly-favoured man,—
 and pointed out clearly our path to please him,
 ensuring thereby our eternal happiness, we
 have no excuse if we lose the great reward.
 Now, as religion in general is founded upon a
 reverence of God, and an expectation of re-
 wards and punishments in a future state of ex-
 istence; so the Christian religion is a system of
 faith and worship contained in the New Testa-
 ment, and laid down by Jesus Christ himself,
 who is our Saviour, and our King, “over all
 “God, blessed for ever.”

THAT man, whose life is a transcript of the
 precepts of the gospel, need not be reminded
 of his duty to his *neighbour*, much less to those
 who are *bone of his bone*, and *flesh of his flesh*.—
 He well knows, that “the love of God is” not
 “shed abroad” in that heart which “can see
 “his brother have need, and shut up his bowels
 “of compassion from him.” To “labour with
 “his hands, in order to support the weak,”
 he

he is convinced to be his duty, much more those of his "own kindred and household;" for if even "a cup of cold water," bestowed on a *stranger*, only "because he belongs to Christ, shall not lose its reward,"---what benefit must accrue from a conscientious discharge of our duty in *every possible* instance?---Shall we then "deny the faith" and prove ourselves "worse than infidels?" Nay, shall we debase the rational creature below the very brutes that perish? who, by unerring instinct, never fail to provide for their young,---to nourish them, support and protect them, until they are able to take care of themselves?

It may be asked what those wants and necessities of our household are, against which we are thus bound to provide? *Food and raiment, with suitable instruction*, I presume, comprise all that is absolutely necessary for us in this world. And there are few, one would hope, so thoughtless (to use no harsher epithet) as entirely to neglect this incumbent duty. But it is a fact, an incontrovertible fact, that many
look

look no further than the present---think not of to-morrow, nor are in the least concerned what it may bring forth.

Blest with health, my brethren, you are now able to work,---to brave the stormy seas, and amply provide a maintenance for your respective families.---But can you flatter yourselves that this will always be the case?---Have you never known an instance wherein your acquaintance, as healthy and hardy as yourselves, have been incapacitated by sickness, or disqualified by accidents, to earn the bread which you now so richly taste?---Have you never heard the forlorn widow lament in doleful accents the loss of an indulgent husband? ---Cannot you suppose her thus to express the feelings of maternal tenderness over her helpless orphans? "I am left, my children, " your protector, without the means of protection.---The few comforts of life we enjoyed in common together, are fled with " your affectionate parent who procured them. " Anxious to provide for *you* and *me*---he sunk

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under

“ under the load of evils which his solicitude
 “ suggested.---The bitterness of death was en-
 “ creased with the apprehensions of what we
 “ should suffer when we were left behind him.
 “ The stroke is now given, and we feel what
 “ I beheld at a distance with gloomy horror.
 “ ---But though the scene be thus wofully
 “ changed---though every comfort be vanish-
 “ ed---under the providence of the Almighty
 “ we will not despair. Thy ways, O God, are
 “ unsearchable---and if it seem good to thee to
 “ deprive us of the means of subsistence here,
 “ (for all thy dispensations, however unpala-
 “ table, are tender mercies) grant us, gracious
 “ God! soon to meet, where tears, and sorrow,
 “ and anguish, shall be known no more.”*

Perhaps to aggravate, if possible, her distress
 ---that husband had a few days before left her
 in health and spirits---little dreaming, alas! that
 in so short a time he would bid an everlasting
 adieu to all things here below!---Have you
 never heard of a case like this?---I dare say you
 have.

* See—St John on Compassion.

have. If so, by what infallible means are you exempt from sharing the same fate?—Exposed to similar dangers—composed of the like frail materials—your lot to be hurt, to sicken, or to die, may not be far distant. But if that Providence, which hath hitherto preserved you, should continue to be the lifter up of your head,—even unto a good old age—you cannot hope that it will be with you then as it hath been in the days which are past.—Your eyes having lost their piercing sight,—your brawny arms become weak and feeble,—and your once active limbs, scarce able to support the tottering body, will be very unfit to perform the necessary duty,—and much more so to undergo those hardships to which the occupation of a mariner is constantly exposed.

In each of these cases let me suppose it possible for one or other of you to be represented.—Probably some may languish upon a bed of sickness before the expiration of many days. If so—have you ever thought of making a provision against that time of need?—Out of the

abundance of your wages is there ought reserved against that day of calamity?—Perhaps you are married—married to a deserving woman—a woman who loves you as her own soul, and who has brought you some sweet pledges of her conjugal affection.—Could your mind be tranquil at the dreary prospect of want staring you in the face?—attended by a disconsolate wife, and surrounded by your helpless children—without any means of comfort or support for the one or for the other, except by their “soliciting the cold hand of charity!”

From the breaking of a rope,—from the slipping of your hand or foot,—and from numberless other casualties, you might any of you be reduced to the same deplorable situation.—And should it please God, either by consuming disease, or the more sudden visitation of his Providence (by means improperly called accidents)—to remove you from this transitory world,—you may easily suppose what would prove the portion of your wretched family, in case you have made no provision for them.

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In like manner, the infirmities of old age—even with a competence, will be a sufficient trial of your patience and resignation to the Divine will;—exclusive of the bitter reflection of having been improvident, if not wilfully extravagant in your youth, which has at last terminated in a miserable poverty.

The *art of prevention* has, by wise men, always been esteemed preferable to that of *remedy*:—and in no instance is it more strikingly verified than in the subject which claims our present consideration.—To obviate the extreme of misery,—to smooth the pillow of indigent sickness,—to alleviate the pungent sufferings of misfortune,—and to pour some comfort into drooping nature,—is what I am desirous to recommend, as the result of subsidiary institutions like this which we now piously commemorate.

There is no plan which man's inventive faculty has yet hit upon, more likely to answer these salutary purposes than that of Societies, established upon liberal principles, and under
wise

wise regulations, for *mutual relief*.—With a view to this important end has the PROVIDENT ASSOCIATION been formed, which well deserves every encouragement and support.—Though as yet in its infancy, and still capable of being more extensively useful, its good effects must already be evident to us all.

Were I to attempt an enumeration of *all* its beneficial effects, your patience would be exhausted by my transgressing the bounds of a modern discourse; therefore I must be content only to mention *some* of its salutary consequences.—Is it not a cheering prospect to the mind of man when light arises out of darkness?—Should pale disease spread languor o'er your frame (I speak to those who are members of this society) and confine you in your habitation, to the couch or to the bed!—Should you have the misfortune to break your limbs—or otherwise be deprived of their use!—In either case you are not thereby totally bereft of the necessities of life.—Even when hoary age, with benumbing embrace, shall have gradually frozen

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zen up your powers of action, you will (like the economical ant) be provided of sustenance against the stern winter of life.—That trifling sum which you now so wisely spare out of the lawful earnings of your vocation, will then return to you with ample interest.—Stormy winds may howl—thundering tempests rage—and boisterous seas may shipwreck the weary sailor—you will then feel, by happy experience, that you have secured a comfortable retreat from those busy, dangerous scenes—and may recount, with safety, (O! may it be with gratitude!) the many perils to which you have been exposed.

But further, this provision is not confined to yourselves,—for, whether in the bloom of youth, or in the evening of your days, you lay down upon the bed of death,—it is a solacing reflection, that your wives and infant offspring will reap the benefit of your provident care.—And is it not an exhilarating thought, that, whenever it shall please God to call you, they will not be entirely destitute of support ;—but
may,

may, by their own endeavours, added to the sum they will be entitled to from this Association, be enabled to live in a decent and comfortable way?—How much more conducive to their happiness, and congenial to their feelings is this, than to leave them in a *selfish* world—consigned to the mercy of inhumanity,—and the parochial allowance of a work-house!

Be punctual then in your contributions to this excellent fund,—and consider (which is a proud thought)—that *hereby* you preserve your *independence*, as far as it can be applied to the imperfect state of man—and lay up in store for yourselves and households, that which you may demand as your right, and which will be a comfortable provision against the day of necessity.

Another inducement, (which is the last I shall at present mention) to promote and encourage Societies like this, is,—*hereby* you discharge one of the prime duties of a Christian; as we are informed by the word of God, that

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all our doings without Charity are nothing worth—
 and that our love to God can only be displayed
 by our good-will to man.—It is not only a pro-
 vident care for yourselves, against a time of
 need, but it is an act of charity to your bre-
 thren :—An act which would reflect honour
 on the highest station, and add dignity to the
 most exalted character.—How generous, how
 humane, how happy the reflection, that you
 become instrumental to the relief, comfort, and
 sustenance of those with whom you thus asso-
 ciate, whenever they may require it—“ always
 “ remembering the words of the Lord Jesus,
 “ how he said,—It is more blessed to give than
 “ to receive.”

Enough, I hope, has been said concerning
 the utility of this Institution to encourage us
 to adhere stedfastly to our engagements—and
 also to induce others who are not members of
 this or some other similar plan, to unite in par-
 ticipating and distributing Philanthropy and
 Independence.

Never

Never let us forget, my Christian Brethren, whilst we are careful and troubled about many things, that "one thing" *especially* "is needful:"—Whilst we are provident for the perishing body, let us not neglect the soul—that unerring monitor which reminds us of the grave, and yet informs us (what Revelation hath confirmed) that *it will never die*.—"What will it profit a man if he should gain (were it possible) the whole world, and lose his own soul?"—It behoves us then to be strictly upon our guard "as those who wait for the coming of their Lord"—seeing "the fashion of this world passeth away, and there is no work, nor device, nor wisdom, nor knowledge in the grave, whither we are going."

In applying myself chiefly to Mariners, the peculiar necessity of *their* speedy preparation for another world might emphatically be urged,—for *they*, literally speaking, whilst at sea,—*are in jeopardy every hour*.—But as time will not admit of a special application to *them*,—and as *we all* hold our existence here upon a very precarious

rious tenture—a slender thread indeed—which may “break at every breeze,”—let us all be prevailed upon to make a proper use of those few moments which we have yet to live.

Much remains to be done by each of us—and what space is allotted us for the great work of our salvation is uncertain.—Perhaps with some, even the *first step* is not yet taken towards an eternity of happiness: and if there be *any* in *this* assembly who are ignorant of their fallen state by nature, and have never yet considered the error of their ways, (O “think me not “your enemy because I tell you the truth”)—be persuaded to reflect on what a precipice you stand!—Not he who sleeps upon the top of a mast is more exposed to temporal danger, than you are to eternal misery.—If you are overtaken by death in this sinful and unregenerate condition, you are miserable for ever: God grant that you may “see the things which “belong to your peace, before they be hid from “your eyes.”

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Are there any amongst us who are but *almost* Christians?—Who are half inclined to lead a godly life—but are perpetually starting aside, like a broken bow! O may that declaration of the Most High God efficaciously reduce them to a divine life,—“If any man
 “draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure
 “in him.”—Had not our Saviour himself informed us, we must have acknowledged it to be an indisputable truth, that *no man can serve two masters*.—Therefore, we must either be the servants of God, or the servants of Mammon.—Let sacred admonitions like these have their due weight—“Chuse ye this day *whom ye will*
 “serve.”—“To-day, whilst it is called to-day,
 “if ye will hear his voice, harden not your
 “hearts—for, behold, now is the accepted time
 “—behold, now is the day of salvation.”—
 “Seek ye the Lord, therefore, while he may
 “be found; call ye upon him while he is near:
 “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the un-
 “righteous man his thoughts—and let him
 “return unto the Lord, and he will have mer-
 “cy upon him, and unto our God, for he will
 “abundantly pardon.”

Merciful God, enable us to accept the gracious invitation—give us to see the exceeding sinfulness of sin—work in us a sincere and hearty repentance of our past misconduct, and confirm our resolution to lead a new life. O! may we no longer be *led captive by the devil at his will*—nor enslaved by our carnal lusts and passions!--but, (“laying aside every weight, “and especially the sin that hath” hitherto “so easily beset us”) henceforth, “run with “patience the race that is set before us;” and, by thine almighty aid, “yield ourselves servants of righteousness unto holiness, that our “end may be everlasting life,” through the merits of Jesus Christ our Saviour. *Amen.*

Merciful God, enable us to accept the gift
of His love—give us the exceeding
fullness of His work in us a heart and
heart—representing of our past misdeeds and
condemning the intention to lead a new life. O!
may we no longer be led by the world
As we—now comforted by our great love and
passions—let us, "laying aside every weight,"
and especially the "burden of the law,"
"to easily believe us," "henceforth," "can with
patience the race that is set before us," and
by this straight path, "yield ourselves to
"vants of righteousness," "in holiness, that our
"end may be life," "through the
merits of Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.



